

OLC 77-5124/1
30 November 1977

(b) (3)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

[REDACTED]
Deputy Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT:

Senator James Abourezk's (D., S.Dak.)
Letter Concerning the USS Liberty

1. Action Requested: None. For your information only.

2. Background: On 18 October 1977, Senator Abourezk sent you a letter concerning the publication of CIA documents by the American Palestine Committee which the Committee claimed proved that the sinking of the USS Liberty was a deliberate act by the Israelis; a charge which you subsequently denied on television. This first Abourezk letter charged that the CIA had misled the American Palestine Committee and asked you to explain this matter.

On 11 November 1977, you replied to Abourezk, denying that the American Palestine Committee had been misled or vilified by CIA. This letter specifically set forth the facts.

Senator Abourezk is now back with a new set of questions to be answered. His letter of 18 November 1977 does not charge CIA with anything; it does ask precise questions about the FOIA action we had with the American Palestine Committee; it requests one document which was never released to the American Palestine Committee; and the Senator now asks for your judgment and that of CIA, based on everything known, if the attack on the Liberty was deliberate or an honest mistake.

3. Staff Position: We have asked the Coordinator for Information and Privacy and the Congressional Support Staff of NFAC to research the questions and help us draft a reply. I think a forthright response will satisfy the Senator and lay this matter to rest as far as he is concerned. Since it will take some time to coordinate the reply, we will acknowledge the Senator's second letter and assure him of your interest in providing a full and complete answer to his questions.

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